

Orillia's New Clear Garbage Bag Program



The City of Orillia is moving to a clear garbage bag program beginning in February 2022. To help residents better understand the program, here are some answers to commonly asked questions.

What is a clear garbage bag program?

Residents are to place their garbage in a clear plastic bag instead of an opaque (black or green) plastic bag. Residents can use up to two small privacy bags such as a regular-sized shopping bag to hide items they don't want others to see. Rigid garbage containers are still able to be used, but if the garbage bin is lined, it will need to be lined with a clear garbage bag.

When is Orillia moving to the clear bag program?

The clear bag program takes effect on Monday, February 7, 2022.

Why is Orillia moving to a clear garbage bag program?

The main goal of this program is to divert recyclable and compostable materials from the garbage to reduce what ends up at Orillia's Waste Diversion Site (landfill). This will increase the landfill's life, ultimately saving taxpayers a lot of money in the long-term. In Orillia specifically, almost 36% of what goes in the garbage at the curb could go in the recycling box or green bin. Clear garbage bag programs discourage residents from setting out recycling and compostable materials in their garbage as it makes it more apparent who is participating in diversion (recycling and green bin) programs and who is not. Other municipalities have seen waste diversion rates increase by as much as 10% with a clear garbage bag program.

What happens if I put my garbage out in an opaque garbage bag after February 7, 2022?

Your garbage will not be collected (even if it is tagged with an Orillia Garbage Tag). City staff are here to help anyone wishing to learn more about what can be recycled or composted.

Will my bag not be picked up if I throw out a recyclable item that is soiled? For example, soiled tin foil?

It is understood some recycling material will be soiled so it will need to go in the garbage. This would not be a reason to leave the material behind, particularly if the resident has also set out their recycling boxes and a green bin demonstrating that they are recycling. The collection drivers will leave behind clear garbage bags that contain a large amount (or over 10%) of recycling and compostable materials.

Will local retailers sell clear bags (both large and small)?

City staff have notified local grocery and hardware store retailers and their head offices about stocking up on large and small clear bags prior to the implementation of the program.



What can I do with my pet waste?

Pet waste in Orillia goes in the garbage. Small dog waste bags can be placed within the clear garbage bag and will not be considered privacy bags. All other pet waste should be placed in a clear bag. Please note that pet waste wrapped in newspaper within a clear bag will not be cause for leaving the garbage behind. To cut down on pet waste going to landfill, residents are encouraged to set up a dedicated backyard composter for just pet waste and use the resulting compost on lawns, flower gardens and shrubs, but not vegetable gardens. For more tips visit orillia.ca/recyclingtips.

My household generates incontinence products that I don't want my neighbours to see. What can I do?

Incontinence products can be placed in the privacy bag(s) or within a clear plastic bag(s) within a rigid container. Please also note that disposable diapers do not require a garbage tag in Orillia.

What should I do with my black/green garbage bags?

You are encouraged to use the bags up before the new clear bag program takes effect. If you do end up with leftover black/green bags, it is recommended that they be used for storage or to hold donation items to local charities, non-profit groups and churches. The bags themselves can also be donated to willing charities that may have opportunities to reuse them (clothing storage, etc.).

What are the benefits of the clear garbage bag program?

There are many benefits of a clear garbage bag program including:

- Increased diversion of recyclables and green bin organics from the waste stream through curbside collection. Based on the experiences of other municipalities, Orillia could reach its 75 per cent waste diversion goal by implementing a clear garbage bag program.
- The program would conserve valuable landfill space and extend the life of the landfill by at least two years or more based on current landfilling rates.
- The program would offer increased worker safety by enabling the garbage collectors to see the contents of the bags and avoid hazardous items, such as sharp glass, needles, etc.
- The program would greatly assist with the removal of hazardous waste items from the waste stream, such as batteries, paint, pharmaceuticals, oil, gasoline, etc.

Why am I being encouraged to use clear plastic? Shouldn't we be reducing the amount of plastic we use?

All clear garbage bag programs implemented have seen a significant increase in diversion. This means that less plastic garbage bags are set out and more plastic is diverted for recycling (as well as other recyclable and compostable materials). Orillia residents that do not wish to use plastic bags can still place their garbage directly in a rigid container that is no larger than 133 litres. If residents are lining their rigid container with a bag, it must be a clear bag.

What other municipalities have a clear garbage bag program?

Other municipalities with clear bag programs include the City of Markham, the Town of Orangeville (Dufferin County), and the Town of Goderich. The City of Markham saw an 11% increase in diversion after one year of having the clear bag program in place. When Markham switched to a clear bag garbage collection program, there was very limited initial public support of the program, but several years after implementation, 100% of the residents surveyed indicated that they supported the program.

Other questions?

Visit orillia.ca/clearbag for more information on this program.

Questions? Call 705-325-3522 or email enviroservices@orillia.ca.

Check out the City of Orillia's Solid Waste Collection Guide for information on what can be recycled and composted.